3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 All Sinkiang All

342 duty as a chimney, open during heavy rain is solved in an ingenious fashion. The felt cover is pulled almost but not quite over it; the corner of the felt opposite to the direction from which the rain is coming is then lifted on the end of a forked pole away from the rim of the "chimney," thus making a kind of vertical ventilator facing away from the rain. The other end of the forked pole is held firmly in mid-air by means of guy ropes attached to the sides of the tent. *Aq-ois* stand a gale very well, their shape being such that the higher the wind the more firmly the structure is pressed to the ground; I never heard of one being blown away. To make assurance doubly sure, however, a large stone is sometimes placed in the tent and the woodwork of the roof anchored to it by a rope.

The putting together of the *aq-ois* is always done by the women, who are remarkably quick about it. I have seen a large one put up by two girls in half an hour. A middle-sized *aq-oi* forms three camel- or yak-loads when taken down. For short distances it can be moved bodily by ten or twelve men, who range themselves round the *inside* of the structure and lift it at a given signal. As they cannot see where they are going, they have to be steered by some one outside.

353 The interior of a typical *aq-oi* is full of interest. A fire burns merrily in the middle and a cauldron of *mach* simmers gently upon it. Farthest from the door is the *ashkhana* or kitchen, screened off from the rest of the hut by gaily-coloured mats made of reeds tightly wound with dyed wool. In this sanctum the goodwife keeps her milk, cream and curds in vast wooden bowls; it is really a dairy, not a kitchen. Another arc of the circle is occupied by a row of very young lambs, which lie or stand tethered closely to a rope pegged down along the walls. In wet weather the young lambs, if any, are kept most of the day inside the tents; once when I took refuge for the night in an *aq oi* and threw myself down upon the felt which had been spread for me, I was astonished to feel what I thought was a pillow under the top end of the rug move when I put my head on it; it was a solitary lamb, very woolly and very surprised.

352 Round the walls, from the convenient pegs provided by the upper ends of the trellis, hang all kinds of odds and ends; *bashtiks* or bright-hued saddle-bags of patchwork or painted leather, sieves, fur-rimmed hats, big balls of newly-spun wool, skins full of curds, hatchets, *chapans* or quilted coats and so on. There will usually be a *dotar* or long-stemmed guitar made from a gourd, and an ancient matchlock of immense length with a

[534 411]

3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 All Sinkiang All

105 centuries, and even now that Faith is noticeably weaker here
563 and paganism stronger than at Yarkand or Kashgar. With this fact is undoubtedly connected—whether as cause or effect it is difficult to say—Khotan's pre-eminence in arts and crafts. As I have already remarked, its people weave better, embroider better, work metal better and design more artistically than those of any other oasis in the province, not even excepting Kucha. At Khotan, singing and playing are not a monopoly of the professionals, but are practised by all classes; D. tells me that the dancing at the women's parties is noticeably more natural and lively than the somewhat stilted (though never ungraceful) measures danced by the beauties of Kashgar.

535 The following is an account from one of D's. letters of the dancing at a typical Kashgar "purdah party."

> "When the food had been cleared away, the three musicians set up a song and a lively tune on the guitar and tambourine. After a becoming hesitation one of the guests got up and danced. It was curious dancing, rhythmical, rather stiff, without much variety in the steps, but a great deal of graceful arm-work, yet quite different from the typical Indian nautch. As she danced, one by one the other guests rose, walked up to her with money in their hands, passed their arms over her head, and then dropped the money into a tray in front of the musicians. When every one including myself had given something, the dancer turned to one of the other guests and danced in front of her until she got up and took the floor, when the first one subsided into a corner. This process was repeated until all the guests had danced except myself. During the dancing of each guest all the others put money into the musicians' tray with the same ceremonial, often only a copper or two, but always something. Some of the richer ones dropped presents of Indian cloth of gold, Chinese silk or Russian velvet, into the musicians' tray. Then, as every one looked at me, I got up and gave them a Highland sword-dance, which was a huge success and brought the band large sums."

533 The Eastern Turkis are a musical race. At Kashgar professional minstrels abound and are in request at every
[534] party. The instruments most commonly in use are the *dotar*, two-stringed guitar; the Persian *rabāb*, a six-stringed kind of mandoline; and the *dop* or tambourine. The *surnai* or pipe of Afghanistan is also occasionally heard. The ballad is still a living verse-form, and the troubadours of Artush are famous for their improvizations on any subject. Two days after the defeat and execution of the Titai a ribald ballad, which I took down later, was being sung about him in the streets. The young men and boys sing everywhere they go;

3: Skrine G-3 (1922-1924) 1926 All Sinkiang All

CHAPTER XV

UNDER THE NORTHERN RIM OF TIBET

IN the spring of 1924 official business along the south-eastern road once more demanded my personal attention. Leaving Kashgar on 1st March and spending a busy fortnight at Yarkand, we reached Keriya on 12th April after short halts at Posgam, Karghalik, Goma and Khotan. On the way home we broke new ground between Keriya and Khotan and again between Khotan and Karghalik; but on the outward journey we used the same direct caravan route which we had already twice traversed, and I will therefore confine myself as far as Keriya to a few passages from diaries and letters.

Yarkand, 7th March, 1924.

On the wide grassy plain south of Yangi Hissar this morning we overtook a caravan of camels carrying Tashkend sugar and Baku oil from Kashgar to Khotan. They were fine shaggy brutes and as impressive as camels always are when you see them in long strings filing across the wide spaces of the earth. But what marked this caravan among all I have ever seen—or heard—was its music. Never was there such a carillon of bells as that which rose to heaven from this slow-moving train of unmusical-looking antediluvians. There were loud bells and soft bells, big clanging bells and little bubbling bells, high-pitched bells and low booming bells and cracked bells, double bells one inside the other, copper bells from Kashgar and iron bells from Toqsun far along the road to Mongolia. Some of these latter have as clappers—what do you think? Camels' bones. I bought one the other day as a curiosity. There is something grimly pathetic about the idea of camels padding week after week, month after month, across Asia with the bones of their predecessors tinkling in the bells at their necks.

We had a really brilliant day for our "triumphal entry" into Yarkand with about a hundred British subjects of all kinds and religions mounted on more or less unmanageable ponies behind us. Yarkand as a whole took the utmost interest in our arrival, for it had been rumoured that we had gone back to India and that a former incumbent of the post had returned. I was amused to hear a woman in the bazaar say to a friend as I rode past *Bulturki Consul shu* (This is last year's Consul).

/The Kirghiz/

000 before his father-in-law, it must be as a stranger. At this
563 stage, if the bride has proved to be unfaithful, the boy's father
586 may demand the bride price back and break off the marriage.

563 When the tent is finished, the bridegroom takes it and his
591 bride to his own home. If, after one year, the bride finds her
586 married life unsatisfactory, her father may return the bride price to her husband and the couple is divorced.

4. Work and leisure

563 General work around the tent is done entirely by women. The
462 women are strong, healthy, and energetic workers. They not
181 only do the housework, but they also milk the yaks, sheep, cows and goats, weave rugs, make rope and build and pitch the tents. Men, though strong and able to endure great hardships, incline
[517] toward indolence. They like to play the guitar far into the night.
[534] Nevertheless, they also have work to do. They cultivate the barley fields and look after the safety of the flocks and herds on the steep mountainsides.

563 The Kirghiz are sports-minded. Their most common game is
526 baiga, in which the carcass of a sheep or goat is the object of contention. Forty or fifty contestants, mounted on strong horses, strive for possession of the carcass. It is every man for himself. One man dashes forward with the carcass and the others pursue him, trying to tear it away from him. If he is unhorsed, by fair means or foul, he must yield up the trophy. A fast, furious, dangerous game, the Kirghiz love it. In it they display their remarkable horsemanship.

563 The Kirghiz love music and dancing. Only the men dance. The
535 music is provided by a dulcimer, a native banjo and a drum, and
534 much form and ceremony are involved in the dance.

D. The New Uighurs

563 1. The people

The New Uighurs are also called the Eastern Turks. They
[162] comprise about seventy per cent of the population in the southern
[131] part of Sinkiang Province, and some live north of the Tienshan Mountains wherever the soil is fit for agriculture. They are a farming people.

563 The New Uighurs are noted for their gentle character, their
181 honesty, hospitality and complaisance. Criminal offenses among them are very rare; they look upon such crimes as murder,
[674] arson and robbery with a sort of horror. Their houses are never
[342] locked, and their grain is stored in outside repositories.

[251] They are a people who love to make music. Their most com-
[534] mon instruments are the dotou, a two-stringed guitar, a six-stringed mandolin and the tambourine. Boys and young men sing
563 wherever they go, and there are singing beggars and wandering
533 minstrels. The people have love songs, ballads, comic ditties,

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286 Khotan is the most famous of the cities in Sinkiang in the
531 production of the famous oriental rugs, in needlework and also
199 in metal works (Kashgar and Yarkand are also important centers of rug weaving). The design of many of the rugs is a most interesting mixture of Persian and Chinese styles. The whole treatment is unmistakeably Persian, though many small details are Chinese. The same blending of the Far with the Near East is found in the beautiful embroidery of Khotan. The stitch chiefly used in the embroidery is the Turkish chain stitch, which is not found in the embroidery in China, but the wave and cloud patterns, the butterflies and some of the flowers are definitely of Chinese design. Khotan is also famous for its craftsmanship in brass and copper household utensils decorated with elaborate floral designs in pierced metal work.

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531
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286 Kuch in the north has been famous for generations for the
294 gold and silver embroidery on velvet. Women's indoor caps are
531 the chief article of manufacture. The design as a whole is Per-
[199] sian, but the use of circular medallions in embroidery on robes is a Chinese device.

53 There has been a tremendous decline in all these works of
517 art and articrafts in the present century, mainly because of the
199 availability of factory-manufactured cheap objects of daily use,
198 from both Russia and China proper. Thus, the carpets of Khotan and the surrounding country are slowly disappearing, and their quality has gone down. The expensive handmade items are replaced by the cheap materials provided by modern industry. The class of artists and artisans has declined, since it is impossible for them to compete with new imported products.

517 The artistic expressions inspired by the new Communist re-
532 gime are totally different from the old indigenous ones. They
199 center around paintings and statues glorifying the present-day
68 leaders, and describing episodes from the life of the newly "liberated" working class. Nothing could be more foreign to the spirit and traditions of the Eastern Turkis.

E. Music and Dance

523 The taste for music and dance is highly developed in Sin-
529 kiang, and it constitutes the main means of entertainment for important social occasions. There are professional musicians (maghmatchi) organized in bands of three or four individuals, available for hire. At many public feasts, a band is hired for entertainment. The musicians chant as they play their instruments. The tunes are simple, composed primarily for accompaniment to the dance, or, more often, improvised. To the Western-trained ear, both tune and rhythm are monotonous.

534 Most of the musical instruments used in these bands are of
[199] Persian origin. Grenard lists the following instruments:

Doutar—a long guitar with two strings.

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534 Sitar—very similar to the doutar, but has nine strings which are played with a bow.

Tambur—consisting of five strings that are plucked with the fingers.

Rbab—longer than the previously mentioned instruments, a sort of mandolin with five strings along the front of the instrument and five others of different lengths along the side.

Hechtar—a guitar with eight strings.

Ney—a pipe with eight holes.

Surney—a copper trumpet.

Sipay—antelope horn with iron rings.

Dop—a drum.

Kalun—a kind of psaltery (ancient stringed instrument) made of a wooden box on which eighteen pairs of brass wires are strung, supported by wooden pads, regulated by fixed keys at the side. (The Chinese have a similar instrument, and it is possible that the kalun was brought from China.)

535 The dance is performed by both men and women. Each usually dances by himself, although a man and woman may dance together. They sing as they dance. The dance is fiery and rhythmic. The body sways continuously and the arms play a very important part in expressing the mood of the dancer. When a number of women perform together, they usually form a circle and exchange places. They sometimes arrange themselves in a double line or in pairs, each person dancing in her own place. Like the Turkic music, the dance steps seem dull and unvaried to the unaccustomed Western observer.

This form of dance is quite unknown in the Moslem parts of Western Asia, and would be highly frowned upon. Le Coq is of (194) (114) the opinion that these dances were probably inherited from the old pre-Islamic times.

533 535 177 668 The arts of folk dance and music have been promoted by the Communists as part of their program of nationality cultural activities and expressions. The professional teams of dancers and musicians perform often in the different National Festivals in China and also abroad. More than encouraging the performance of the existing folk dances and music, the Communists have been promoting the creation of the new "folk dance" and "folk music," to express the new era of liberation. A sample of the results obtained is to be found in the following excerpts from so-called Uighur folk songs:

(539) "You have made our land a lovely garden, Mao Tse-tung,
You are the inspiration of our life, Mao Tse-tung,
We know you have our welfare at heart, Mao Tse-tung,
You are the saviour of our people, Mao Tse-tung,
Long live Mao Tse-tung!
Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah! H-u-r-r-a-h!"